

Wellness Pointers

Emotional | Environmental | Financial | Mental | Occupational | Physical | Social | Spiritual

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Stress Management

“Stress is when you wake up screaming and you realize you haven’t fallen asleep yet.”

-Anonymous



Stress Management Tips

All stress isn't bad. Stress can initiate change, help us focus on the task at hand, and in some cases even save our lives. Yet, when stress builds up, it can result in the opposites— and cause us to spin our wheels, keep us from concentrating, and cause bodily injury and even loss of life.

The first tip in managing stress is to recognize your stressors. The next step is to put each of them in their place. The following stress management tips, based on some old and some new adages, can help you do just that!

Take a Deep Breath and Count to Ten—

Taking a deep breath or two adds oxygen to your system, which almost instantly helps you relax. In addition, taking a moment to step back can help you maintain your composure, which in the long run, is what you need to work rationally through a stressful situation.

Start with “take a deep breath” and...

1. **Count to ten** (or more or less as the situation warrants!)
2. **Stand up and stretch.** Remember relaxation is the opposite of stress.
3. **Stand up and smile.** Try it! You'll feel better!
4. **Take a short walk.** Do something that changes your focus.

Stop and Smell the Roses—

“Things happen” and sometimes “bad things happen to good people”. If we let them, stressful events can build up, wall us in, and eventually stop us from enjoying the good things in life.

1. **Take the time.** Too often we put the pleasantries of life on the back burner, telling ourselves we don't “have time” or can't “make time” for them. However, actually, time is the only thing we do completely own. While we can't “make” a day that's longer than 24 hours, each of us starts the day with exactly that amount of time. Take a part of your time to recognize the good things in your life.
2. **Sleep on it.** Every coin has two sides and every issue has both pros and cons. List them both then put the list away and take a second look tomorrow. Sometimes “sleeping on” a situation changes the minuses to pluses.

3. **Every cloud has a silver lining.**

After all, rain makes things grow! Ben Franklin found good in a bolt of lightning. Find the good in your stressful situation by listing the negative surges and determining what it will take to make them into positive charges!

“A Man’s Got to Know His Limitations—”

Knowing yourself and your limits may be the most important way to manage stress effectively.

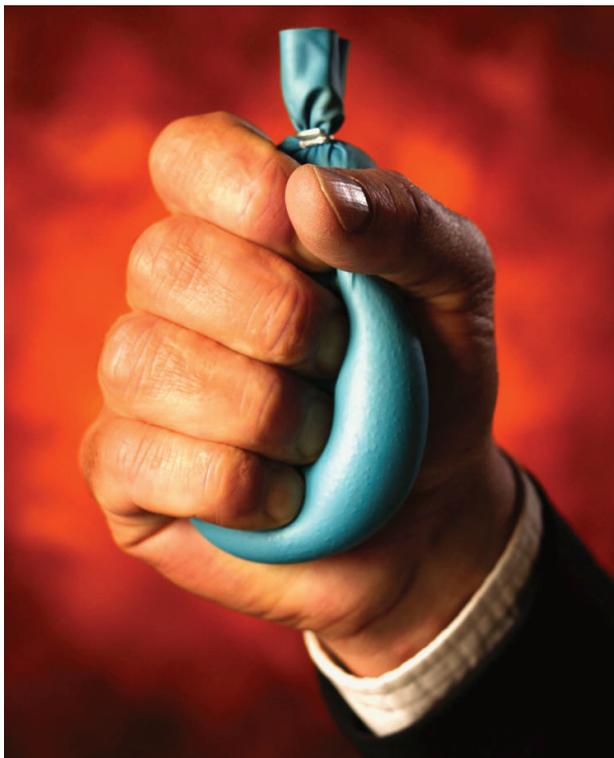
1. **Dare to say no.** One more little thing may be the “straw that breaks the camel’s back”. It’s okay to say “No”, “I can’t”, or “Later”.

2. **Acquit yourself.** Sometimes events really are out of control and you really are “Not Guilty”. Quit blaming yourself.

3. **Be pro-active in finding peace.** Those who unsuccessfully use the crutches of drugs and/or alcohol to alleviate stress often find themselves in a twelve-step program like A.A. where one of the mainstays is the Serenity Prayer:

“God grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change; The Courage to change the things I can; and the Wisdom to know the difference.”

4. **When you need help, get help.** Even Atlas couldn’t bear the weight of the world on his shoulders forever. Whether you need help from kids or spouse in hauling groceries into the house, help from a colleague to solve a work-related problem, or professional help to find the causes of and effectively manage your stress, getting the help you need is in itself a major stress management tip!



Take Time For the Family

The phrase “quality time” has become trite with over-use, but it is quality time spent together that reduces daily family stress and builds strong families that can weather both small storms and large crises.

1. Working at household chores together. Completing simple household chores as a family has several advantages. Doing dishes, raking the yard, spring cleaning, or holding a garage sale offers the family time to communicate, lightens the load for individual family members, and lets individuals build skills and self-esteem.

2. Share a meal. Share at least one meal each day. Albeit, dinner time these days is often hectic with individuals having conflicting work and activity schedules. If this is true in your family, start having family breakfasts. Mealtime is a great time to tune into individual schedules and plan family activities.

3. The family “event”. A special activity can be as complex as a family vacation or as simple as, a trip to the local park or just a family movie night. Plan the activity as a family and make the activity an “event” where each member contributes to making it a successful and enjoyable occasion.

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“Forgive your enemies. It messes up their heads.”



Advice From An Old Tennessee Mountain Man

Almond Cookies

Ingredients

2¾ c white flour

1 c sugar

½ t baking soda

¼ t salt

1 c cold butter

2 eggs, lightly beaten

2 t almond extract

about 25 whole almonds

Preheat oven to 325.

Combine flour, sugar, soda, and salt. Cut the butter into small pieces, add to the bowl, and cut the butter into the flour until mixture resembles coarse cornmeal. Add eggs and almond extract and stir until just combined.

Lightly flour hands, then roll dough into one-inch balls. Place balls on cookie sheet and press an almond into the top of each one, flattening the cookies slightly.

Bake until bottoms are golden, about 15-20 minutes.